

HABS
NY
1-ALB
22-

City Hall
Eagle Street
Albany
Albany County
New York

HABS No. NY-342

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

NAME: CITY HALL

LOCATION: Eagle Street, between Maiden Lane and Pine Street.
Faces Eagle. (See Enclosure 1).
Albany, Albany County, New York.

PRESENT OWNER: City of Albany

PRESENT OCCUPANT: City of Albany

PRESENT USE: City offices

SIGNIFICANCE: (Historical and Architectural)

- Architect: Henry Hobson Richardson
- On site owned for city purposes since 1829 (enclosure 2).
- On National Register (enclosure 3)
- The Hon. Erastus Corning, 2nd will complete his tenth consecutive four-year term as Mayor of the City of Albany in 1981.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Cornerstone laid October 13, 1881. Completed May 1, 1883. (See Enclosure 4). New City Hall authorized by Chapter 285, Laws of the State of New York for 1880. (Enclosure 5).
2. Henry Hobson Richardson. Papers of City Hall Commission. (Enclosure 6). Richardson drawings at Houghton Library, Harvard (Enclosure 7).
3. Norcross Brothers, Contractors. C.H. Rutan, Superintendent. (Enclosure 4). Stone: Milford granite and Longmeadow brownstone.
4. Original Plans at Houghton Library, Harvard (Enclosure 7), and Designation of the Rooms To be Occupied by the City and County Authorities in the New City Hall. 1883. Seven leaves of floor plans. In Office of City Engineer. Early photographic views in Library of Albany Institute of History and Art. Contemporary Descriptions: (Enclosure 8, 9).
5. Interior alterations started February 14, 1917; completed June 1, 1919. C.G. Ogden and J.J. Gander, Architects. (Enclosures 4, 10, 11, 12). Blue prints for same in Office of the City Engineer.

B. Historical Context:

For general history see Van Rensselaer: Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works; Albany City Hall - Past and Present; Hitchcock: Architecture of H.H. Richardson and His Times; The Albany Singing Tower. (Enclosures 9, 13, 14, 15).

- City Hall completed 1883.
- City Hall alterations completed 1919.
- Statue of Major General Philip Schuyler by J. Massey Rhind, erected in front of City Hall, unveiled June 14, 1925. (Enclosure 16).
- Carillon of sixty bells placed in City Hall Tower, 1926-1927.
- Exterior restoration, 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION.

A. Description of Exterior:

For appearance today, see A.I.A. photos. Some details in Enclosure 13. For shape, see enclosure 1. Dimensions: width 120', depth 125', height of tower 210'. Milford granite and Longmeadow brownstone. Fireproof construction, reinforced concrete floors, stone walls.

B. Description of Interior:

See enclosures 11, 12, 13. Note in 13, page 11, portrait of Col. Pieter Schuyler, First Mayor of Albany, painted about 1717, and attributed to Nehemiah Partridge, gift to City and installed 1923.

C. Site:

For site see enclosure 1. City Hall faces Eagle Street at intersection of and beginning of Washington Avenue. Note that the New York State Capitol, Education Building, Albany Academy, Court of Appeals, and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza are in the immediate vicinity of, and within sight of City Hall.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

In Collection of Houghton Library, Harvard.

B. Early Views:

Photographs in Library of Albany Institute of History and Art.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

See enclosures.

2. Secondary sources:

See enclosures.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Plans, drawings, etc. at Houghton Library, and papers of City Hall Commission in the Office of the Albany County Clerk should be reviewed. Miscellaneous material turns up from time to time in City Hall.

Prepared by: Norman S. Rice
Director
Albany Institute of History and Art
August 27, 1981

N.B. ENCLOSURES ARE IN FIELD RECORDS